

Do's and Don'ts of Networking

Reprinted from Networking 1980 by Mary Scott Welch

1. DO be willing to receive other network's business message.
2. DO try to give as much as you get.
3. DON'T be afraid to ask for what you need. Trust the other person to decide for herself whether she wants to do what you ask; DON'T decide for her by not asking. DON'T demand either—allow for the chance of refusal.
4. DO report back to anyone who gives you a lead.
5. DO keep your conversations on track and your phone calls short and to the point.
6. DON'T be afraid to network at social events.
7. DO call members of your network just to keep in touch. DON'T wait to call only when you need something.
8. DO deliver on your promises. Write them down if necessary.
9. DON'T neglect traditional organizations, groups such as AAUW, your church, your college alumnae association, Junior League, etc.
10. DO keep expanding your network. At the end of a conversation, ask, "Do you know anyone else I might talk to about this?"
11. DON'T forget the library. Magazines are great sources of information and names, and librarians are there to assist you.
12. DO ask for only one thing at a time and watch your timing. Make sure someone has time to listen to you before launching into your whole story.
13. DON'T expect instant, magic answers.
14. DO refine your questions.
15. DON'T ask things like, "What kind of business could I start at home?" or "What does it take to write a book?" Also, DON'T ask professionals for free advice or services if they make their living by charging for the advice or service.
16. DON'T expect your network to act as a job placement service.
17. DO offer your help generously. Remember, "What goes around, comes around."
18. DO take advice when you've asked for it.
19. DON'T say, even if true, "I've thought of that," "I tried that and it didn't work," or, "You don't understand."
20. DO make your own guidelines clear to your constituency, and DO be on alert to hear such guidelines from others. If you can't be called at work or talk for an hour on the phone, say so, otherwise, you'll build resentment and damage the spirit of networking.
21. DO take others up on their offer to help.
22. DO wake up on the petty cash aspects of networking.
23. DO be prepared for a slump (but don't give up!) Remember: Network support is based on performance. What you do with your networking resources is strictly up to you. You have to take responsibility for your own growth.